

LCC department celebrates Iranian new year

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News Editor

MAIN CAMPUS — In an effort to bring workers together, staff members will be introduced to New Year traditions that don't involve counting down the seconds before the big ball drops in Times Square.

On Thursday, March 19, LCC's Counseling and Advising, Assessment Center and Career Employment Services department is hosting its Iranian New Year lunch and potluck from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

"(The lunch) was designed not only as an activity for staff to interact, but also as an educational piece," said Rebecca Brewer, academic adviser and event coordinator.

The event, which is exclusive to department employees, will be hosted by the department's social committee.

"(People) will learn all about (Iranian) culture and customs," said Academic Adviser Saiid Mahjoory.

Mahjoory came up with the idea and he is also helping with event coordination.



Mahjoory

"I think it will be a very good educational event," Mahjoory said.

The Iranian New Year (Nowruz) is marked by the spring equinox (first day of spring) and the celebration lasts for 13 days.

"It marks when it is half light/half dark in the spring," Brewer said. "It predates Islam in Iran."

The "half light/half dark" concept represents the holiday's philosophy: There is a beginning following every ending. The traditions of the Iranian New Year revolve around this belief.

According to FarsiNet.com, during the Iranian New Year gifts are exchanged, usually involving older people giving younger family members gifts or money.

The holiday also calls for "spring cleaning."



Courtesy of www.cais-soas.com

Traditional Iranian New Year table: Academic Adviser Saiid Mahjoory will set a traditional Iranian New Year table when LCC's Counseling and Advising, Assessment Center and Career Employment Services department has its Iranian New Year lunch March 19.

People clean and rearrange their homes to properly welcome the New Year.

Other traditions symbolizing renewal include bathing, baking pastries, planting seeds and purchasing new clothes to wear.

Another significant practice of the celebration is leaping over bonfires on the last Tuesday before the New Year. This is viewed as a purification ritual to ensure good health and fortune for the upcoming

year.

"(The tradition) is to get rid of bad things and hope that new things will happen," said Mahjoory.

Brewer said Mahjoory will cook traditional Iranian dishes for the lunch.

"On the actual day of the event Mahjoory is going to set up the traditional table settings," Brewer said. "(Guests) will be given a handout explaining what each item means."

According to Mahjoory the Iranian New Year table is set with seven symbolic items, each one beginning with the letter S in the Persian language Farsi. This layout is called Haft Seen.

The seven dishes stand for the seven angelic heralds of life-rebirth, health, happiness, prosperity, joy, patience and beauty.

Prior to the event staff members can expect educational e-mails, Brewer said.

"Once a week we send out a fast fact about the Iranian New Year," Brewer said. "We are e-mailing all the staff who has been invited information and history on the Iranian New Year."

According to Brewer this year has been the most active for the social committee.

"We work really hard to meet students' needs and sometimes it's nice to take care of ourselves," Brewer said. "When registration starts in April we can have a strong team and rely on each other."

Iranian New Year table (Haft Seen) features seven symbolic items.

1. **Sabzeh:** wheat or lentil sprouts (rebirth)

2. **Samanu:** pudding made from wheat sprouts (sophistication)

3. **Sib:** apple (health and beauty)

4. **Senjed:** Lotus tree fruit (love)

5. **Sir:** garlic (medicine)

6. **Somaq:** sumac berries (sun light)

7. **Serkeh:** vinegar (age and patience)

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